

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants received an Office Action dated August 24, 2003, in parent application (09/652,165) in which the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 16 as anticipated by Bauman (U.S. Pat. No. 6,189,078) and rejected claims 9 and 10 as obvious over Bauman. In the parent case, Applicants canceled claims 1, 9, 10 and 16 to expedite issuance of the remaining allowed claims. In this continuation application and preliminary amendment, Applicants re-submit claims 1, 9, 10 and 16, with claims 1 and 16 being amended, and submit new claims 21-24. Based on the reasons stated herein, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 9, 10, 16, and 21-24 are patentable.

As amended, claim 1 requires, among other limitations, that the processors are grouped into clusters with each cluster having a master processor and at least one slave processor. Further, claim 1 requires "distributing the invalidate messages by the master processor to one or more slave processors within each cluster that contains a processor having a shared copy of the data." Applicants do not find this limitation in the art of record. At least for this reason, claim 1 is patentable.

New claims 21 and 22 depend from allowable claim 1 and thus are allowable at least for the same reason as claim 1. Claims 21 and 22 provide additional limitations that, in combination with the other limitations, are not believed to be taught or suggested by the art of record.

Applicants do not amend claims 9 and 10 in this Preliminary Amendment. The Examiner's rejection of claim in the August 14, 2003 Office Action is defective for at least the following reason. Claim 9 requires a register "which stores configuration settings to determine which one of several shared data invalidation schemes shall be implemented." The Examiner referred to Figure 6A of Bauman for a comparable register. The register depicted in Figure 6A does not teach or suggest a register as claimed. Specifically, the register in Bauman's Figure 6A does not teach or suggest storing configuration setting to determine which one of several shared data invalidation schemes are to be implemented. At least for this reason, independent claim 9 and dependent claim 10 are patentable.

As amended, claim 16 requires, among other limitations, that the nodes are grouped into clusters with each cluster having a master node and at least one slave node. Further, claim 16 requires that "an invalidate message is distributed by the master node to one or more slave nodes within the cluster." Applicants do not find this limitation in the art of record. At least for this reason, claim 16 is patentable.

New claims 23 and 24 depend from allowable claim 16 and thus are allowable at least for the same reason as claim 16. Claims 23 and 24 provide additional limitations that, in combination with the other limitations, are not believed to be taught or suggested by the art of record.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims. In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicant may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the prior art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

If any fees or time extensions are inadvertently omitted or if any fees have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Hewlett-Packard Company Deposit Account Number 08-2025 and enter any time extension(s) necessary to prevent this case from being abandoned.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonathan M. Harris
PTO Reg. No. 44,144
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANTS

HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY
Intellectual Property Administration
Legal Dept., M/S 35
P.O. Box 272400
Fort Collins, CO 80527-2400